



Figure 1. Collecting sites (filled triangles) of *Amazilia beryllina sumichrasti* in Oaxaca and Chiapas, southern Mexico.

difference of the duller plumage and sexual dimorphism in the tail coloration, to *A. b. lichtensteini*. Intergradation of *A. b. devillei* with the nominate form as supposed by Friedmann *et al.* (1950) and Binford (1989) can be excluded not only for reasons of coloration but also of distribution, because there is possibly a separation from the most northwestern population of the race *lichtensteini* in Oaxaca. Additional distributional data on these subspecies are necessary to determine their range boundaries. I presume that *A. b. sumichrasti* is restricted to the southwestern slopes of the Sierra Madre and the Montañas del Norte (as indicated by the MLZ series from Yerba Buena, and adjacent *beryllina* localities in the ECOSUR data bank). With the fragmentary data at hand, it is problematic to estimate if the *sumichrasti* populations are connected or separated by the valley of the Rio Grijalva/Presa de la Angostura in interior Chiapas (Fig. 1), where original woodlands have been widely cleared (Howell & Webb 1995).

Altogether, the appearance of morphological characters in the southern *beryllina* subspecies indicates microevolutionary processes as a result of isolation of preliminary taxa groups. As has been suggested for numerous Central American taxa, including *Amazilia* species (Howell 1993), climatic changes in glacial and interglacial periods which caused,

e.g., cyclic extension and forcing back of humid forests, may have isolated small population groups of proto-*beryllina* in drier areas. Under more suitable environmental conditions, the range could be extended leading to some convergence of morphological features. As a result, these geohistoric events probably isolated also *A. b. lichtensteini* and possibly the northern population of *A. b. sumichrasti* (barrier effect of the Rio Grijalva valley?) from the more coastal populations. In comparison to the *A. beryllina* group, similar patterns of distribution and morphology exist in other congeneric species found in southern Mexico, *A. rutila*, *A. violiceps* and *A. viridifrons* (pers. obs., Howell 1993).

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Lectotypification of *Charadrius rubricollis* Gmelin, 1789

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The note by McAllan and Christidis (1998) regarding the scientific name for the Australian bird now known as the Hooded Plover reflects a lack of understanding of the rules and procedures of zoological nomenclature. The case involves two competing names *Charadrius rubricollis* Gmelin, 1789, versus *Charadrius cucullatus* Vieillot, 1818. McAllan and Christidis (1998: 60) proposed to resolve what they perceived to be “potential confusion” concerning these names by designating a neotype for the former.

A neotype, however, is only to be selected in the course of revisory work, and then only under exceptional circumstances involving closely similar species for which one or both holotypes may be missing, neither of which circumstances apply in this instance. Furthermore, a neotype is not to be designated as an end in itself, so that the action of McAllan and Christidis, whose note has no other purpose, is automatically invalidated by provisions of Article 75 (b & c) of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (I. C. Z. N. 1985—hereafter “the Code”).

The name *Charadrius rubricollis* Gmelin (1789: 687), was based entirely on “Lath. syn. III., 1, p. 212, n. 19” which refers to volume 3, Part 1, of John Latham’s *General Synopsis of Birds* (Latham 1785). Here Latham described what he called the “Red-necked Plover”, this being the source of Gmelin’s name *rubricollis*, neither name being at all

appropriate for the Australian Hooded Plover, which has *no* red in the plumage. No one in the history of the nomenclatural discussions of this species seems to have remarked on this rather obvious fact. Appropriateness has no bearing on the validity of a name but it should be taken into account when there are other valid grounds for dispensing with a misnomer. Latham stated that his Red-necked Plover "Inhabits the South Seas. Found in Adventure Bay, Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania]".

Mathews (1913: 130) found Latham's description to be 'inapplicable to every Australian species, and no previous worker had been able to fix it on any extra-limital form'. Latham made no reference to any specimens or illustrations, so on internal evidence his species would have to be regarded as a *nomen dubium* that is not available for any known species. However, the Code suggests that "if an author, in establishing a nominal species-group taxon, does not explicitly state what specimens constitute the type series, evidence in addition to published evidence may be taken into account" (recommendation 72B). As this is only in the form of a recommendation, some workers may still consider any name based solely on Latham's description to be indeterminable.

Mathews (1913) went on to build a strong circumstantial case, though it is still only that, for Latham's description being a composite based upon two water-colour drawings made by William Ellis on Cook's Third Voyage, these being in the collections of the British Natural History Museum and having previously been discussed by Sharpe (1906: 205) and subsequently by Lysaght (1959), who used the same system for numbering them. The first of these, plate 63, was identified by both Sharpe and Lysaght with the species now known as the Red-necked or Northern Phalarope, *Lobipes lobatus*, based on *Tringa lobata* Linnaeus (1758), Ellis's original specimen having been taken "between Asia and America". The second drawing, plate 67, was identified by Sharpe with "*Aegialitis cucullatus* (Vieill.)", based on a specimen from "Adventure Bay". Lysaght (1959: 333) listed this under *Charadrius rubricollis*, following the terminology of Peters (1934), and likewise considered that the species depicted is clearly the Australian bird now known as the Hooded Plover or Hooded Dotterel.

Contrary to McAllan and Christidis, Mathews (1913) gave no reason for his not using *rubricollis* for the species in question, although inappropriateness may have been more of a factor than their surmise that it was because the name was based on two different species. If Mathews' conclusions are accepted as correct, then the name *Charadrius rubricollis* Gmelin, 1789, is a composite, a circumstance that arose many times in the compilations of Linnaeus and Gmelin and that in no way invalidates the proposed name. The disposition of a composite species is resolved by application of Article 74 of the Code: "If a type series contains more than one specimen and a holotype has not been designated, any author may designate one of the syntypes as the lectotype, by the use of that term or an equivalent expression (e.g., 'the type')". No action that constitutes lectotypification of *Charadrius rubricollis* Gmelin occurs in any of the literature bearing on this case as cited by McAllan and Christidis (1998), however.